

**Relationship between Loneliness, Inferiority Complex and Peer  
Attachment among University Students**

**By**

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## LIST OF ANNEXURES

- Annexure A** Inform consent
- Annexure B** Demographic information sheet
- Annexure C** University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)Scale
- Annexure D** The inferiority scale (TIS)
- Annexure E** Inventory of parent and peer attachment (IPPA)

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>UCLA</b>	University of California, Los Angeles
<b>TIS</b>	The inferiority scale
<b>IPPA</b>	Inventory of parent and peer attachment



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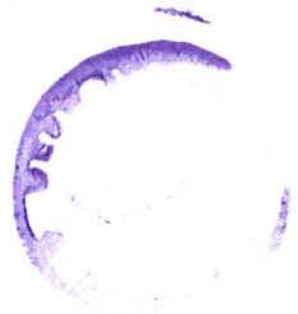
As now my journey here is ended, I am thankful that I had the opportunity to study at the National Institute of Psychology, center of excellence. I have been fortune to have worked with professionals who have rejoiced with me in my success and supported me when I needed it.

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of conducting the present study was to examine the relationship between loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment among university students. Moreover, relationships of different demographic variables were also studied along study variables. Instruments used to measure the variables were loneliness scale (UCLA) developed by Russell, Peplau & Cutrona (1980). The inferiority scale (TIF) developed by Yao, et al., (1997) and peer attachment subscale of 'Inventory of parents and peer attachment (IPPA) developed by Armsden & Greenberg (1987). The sample of the study consisted of 271 students taken from Rawalpindi and Islamabad, with age range of 18-25 years. The non-probability purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. The sample was approached individually, only the individuals who volunteered to participate were included in the study. The criteria to select the sample were the age group which was 18-25 years. The results of the study showed that loneliness was negatively correlated with peer attachment but loneliness was positively correlated with inferiority complex and this relationship was non-significant. Furthermore, results revealed non-significant gender differences on loneliness and peer attachment. Independent sample t-test showed that there was non-significant difference on loneliness and inferiority complex among students with different family system i.e., joint and nuclear. Moreover, mean difference was found between the student's peer attachment with regard to family system i.e., joint and nuclear. Students living in nuclear family system were greater tendency to form relationships as compared to joint family system. Significant differences were found between hostilities and day-scholar students in all of three variables i.e., loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment. Students living in hostels were more prone to loneliness as compared to day-scholars. Moreover inferiority complex in day-scholar was greater as compared to hostilities. Furthermore, day-scholar students were greater tendency to form relationship as compared to hostilities. The implications of the current study have a variety as it will help school psychologist to understand the feeling of loneliness with regard to attachment that can help students who experience loneliness and inferiority complex



*Dedicated to*

*All those who matter so much to me, my parents, my siblings, my  
teachers formers and present with whom I had occasion to share and  
interact*

# **Introduction**

### INTRODUCTION

Loneliness is an inner feeling and an emotional state which is encountered when a person desires to make relationships with other people but ends up being unable to achieve them. Loneliness is a phenomenon that explains the emotional and cognitive state of a person starving for affection. Sometimes a person desires aloneness, but this feeling is distinctively different from loneliness. This situation when a person desires to be alone is called as solitude which is associated with favorable and wished for situations. Loneliness is not related to a person's being antisocial. A person can feel loneliness even in a class of more than 300 students. Loneliness is a shocking awareness that a person feels unconnected to others and that he/she is not important to the society (Tariq & Masood, 2011).

For better survival human requires to live in a form of group where they can build social relationships, make contacts, exchange their knowledge, share their feeling for better life. During their lifetime people may confront situations where they think of themselves not a part of the society. They may feel alienated, rejected and left out from the society and eventually become loners. Being lonely does not simply mean that a person is "isolated", it is to some extent related to perception of an individual (Perlman & Peplau, 1984). Loneliness especially refers to psychological condition of a person. Therefore, it is defined as individual experience of insufficient social relations (Ayalon, 2014).

Another definition of loneliness is stated as the state of a person in an incompatible relationship where one feels avoided contrary to what one wished for, and the state where one cannot recognize what they already have. Such definition of loneliness explains the psychological aspect of loneliness. Overall, we can say that it is an inner annoying/irritating experience but it is also related to an individual's senses. This means that loneliness requires one's thinking that his/her social relations are not up to the mark due to which he/she is a loner. Loneliness is a sign that a person's relationships are not compatible, therefore

they play a key role in realization of one's loneliness and social interactions (Paplau & Perlman, 1982).

Inferiority complex among individuals is also related to lower level of social interactions and thus it may be considered as one of the major sign of loneliness. As the social interests and interactions of an individual increases, the inferiority complexes decrease so in this context low social interests of people also indicate their inferiority complexes (Adler, 1927).

Similarly, parent's role towards their child's loneliness is very vital, the more a child is cared by the parents, the more they develop confidence in themselves for making friends in society. In context to loneliness, children who don't get much care and attention from his/her parents lacks tendency of peer attachment as they don't have confidence to make new friends or interact with new group of people and as Asher, Hymel, and Renshaw (1984) suggested that such children are infamous among their friends and end up in loneliness behavior.

The purpose of this study is to find the correlation between loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment among the university students. The aim of the study is to investigate the difference of above mentioned variables with regards to gender, education level, family systems, residential environments and attachment among fellows/friends.

### **Loneliness**

Loneliness is a shameful, anguish and an intolerable experience that has been observed in children narrating themselves as feeling bored, sadden and showing depressed moods, using phrases such as "I am sad". Peplau & Perlman (1982) defined loneliness as an annoying experience confronted by a person due to poor social interactions. They further declare it to be a personal experience independent of understanding the feelings or time for social interactions. Due to this reason, loneliness could be affecting personal relationships as well as one's explanation of social experience. Weiss (1973) give definition of loneliness as two different but interpersonal aspects. The first aspect arises due to one's experience of lack in social interactions and social unification (i.e., one's acceptance by peers and involving one

in a group activity) and is called as '*social dimension*'. Second one concerns the '*emotional dimension*' which arises due to lack in realization of significant and satisfying socio-emotional bonding with society on more cherished level (i.e., death of parents or the one they love).

Loneliness makes a person separated from the group; in that case the person feels alone, disconnected and isolated from other people that ultimately make a person deprived of relations with the society and cause a strong wish/crave to bind with other people. Loneliness results due to one's emotional state influenced by lack of social life interactions and which should not be confused with external conditions (Asher & Paquette, 2003).

### **Types of Loneliness**

There are various types of loneliness: emotional loneliness, social loneliness, transitional loneliness and chronic loneliness (Weiten & Lloyd, 2003).

**Emotional loneliness.** Emotional loneliness is characterized by anxiety, restlessness and emptiness and is the result of absence of intimate relationships. A person become emotionally lonely when he/she has an absence of a close attachment figure e.g., for a child it may be his parents or for adults it may be a partner or a close friends.

**Social loneliness.** Result from a lack of a friends network e.g., in school, in work setting or community group. For instance a marry couple experience social loneliness when they move to a new city or anew country until the make new social connections

**Transitional loneliness.** Transitional loneliness occurs when people who have had reasonable social relationships in the past become lonely because of a specific disturbance of their social network the death of loved one or divorce or moving to a new setting. This type of loneliness is basically described every day feeling of loneliness that we experience, usually persists for only few minutes or hours (Gerson & Perlman, 1979). It can be adaptive. It is more related with lack of social interaction

rather than the personal characteristics e.g., moving to a new environment (Young, 1982).

**Chronic loneliness.** If feelings of loneliness persist more than two years it is called chronic loneliness. Chronically lonely people have often long term difficulties with relationships. People are unable to do satisfactory interpersonal relationships.

### **Theories of Loneliness**

Attachment and family system theories are commonly used to explain the phenomena of loneliness.

**Attachment theory.** This theory can be explained with the following perspectives:

*Types of deprivation.* Experienced by people is due to lack of attachment rather than one's thinking or perceptions about relationships. Weiss (1973) researched on adolescent period and theorized that at their adolescence period, adolescents leave their parents who are their primary attachment figures and look for a romantic partner to get emotionally attached with. During this time, they face loneliness since they have left their primary attachment figure and have no one to share their feelings with until they find their partner.

*Emotional characteristics.* An individual can experience loneliness due to distress of separation. In the absence of attachment figure, an individual experiences loneliness due to stress of being alone. The emotional experience forces one to reconcile to the person strongly affiliated with. This distress is very uncomfortable and unbearable. The researchers proclaim that staying away from people may signal towards social deficiencies of an individual, similarly, separation distress performs the same functions (Hazan & Shaver, 1989).

*Time perspective.* Time plays a key role for people experiencing separation distress and become unable to form new relationships or continue with the old ones. If they persistently experience separation distress and could not form stable relationship, it can lead to chronic loneliness. Originally proposed and defined by Bowlby (1973), attachment theory states that:



*“any form of behavior that results in a person attaining or retaining proximity to some other differentiated and preferred individual, usually conceived as a strong and wiser” (p.292).*

**System theory and loneliness.** It comprises the key idea that all the objects in world are interconnected as subsystems or elements of an overall system. This is a response to positive thinking about application of fundamental principles of natural science models for selection of social sciences (Younas, 2003).

**Type of deprivation.** This part basically explains utility of system theory with reference to social loneliness, which is the type of deprivation experience by those individuals who have wide discrepancy between their present or actual nature of relationships and desire relationships.

**Emotional characteristics.** An emotional characteristic of loneliness is because of the discrepancy experienced as social loneliness. These emotional characteristics of loneliness provide the necessary motivation in an attempt to reduce the discrepancy between desired and achieved pattern of social relation or social network (Flanders, 1976).

**Time perspective.** The time perspective is the dimension which helps to differentiate between those adolescents who feel loneliness temporary or for short period and can be easily overcome and those adolescents who experience loneliness for long time and they are called chronically lonely. System theory is helpful in describing with what types of families generally tends to have moderate to chronically lonely adolescents. Olson’s Circumplex model of the family explain that unbalanced types of families is also an evidence of adolescent’s loneliness. It is stated that lack of cohesion in families is also an evidence of adolescent’s loneliness. Similarly, emotionally cold, undisciplined and irrational families show statistical relationship with adolescent’s loneliness (Peplau & Perlman,1982).

## **Causes of Loneliness**

The phenomenon of loneliness has been explored by many researchers and the causes of loneliness are described as below:

**Psychoanalytic approach.** Freudian and other psychoanalytical authors describe loneliness as premature attachment and unfulfilled dreams of childhood (Bowlby, 1973; Weiss, 1973).

**Existentialist's perspective.** Loneliness is considered as normal understanding of a person for attaining deep self-consciousness by existentialists. It is also a mental result when a person's feelings and expressions are not rewarded and his/her indication of anxiety that widens self-rejection (Mijuskovic, 1977).

**Cognitive perspective.** Cognitive theorists have debated that loneliness arises due to the divergence of desired relationships from the actual ones i.e., negative, inner and self-allocation of deficiencies in a relationship and illogical perspectives regarding control of one's life (Peplau & Perlman, 1982).

**Behaviorist perspective.** Behaviorist's perspective about loneliness states that it emerges due to lacking skills which are otherwise important in prospering dear and social relations (Jones, Hobbs, & Hockenbury, 1982). Social skills help in communication and interaction with others and help reducing solitude.

**Characterological perspective.** This perspective suggests that there are people who are by nature vulnerable to isolation. Based on above mentioned perspective, researchers have concluded that confident people are less prone to loneliness.

**Situational perspective.** A situational theorist proclaimed that it is not necessary that the personality of a person plays role for his/her loneliness it is rather the different situations confronted by an individual that make him suffer from loneliness. Other factors causing loneliness may include demise of partner and shifting to a new house.

Lonely people have strong belief that they can never find someone for them, they always have pessimistic approach towards life and relationships. They are also

very resistant towards changing their life style and find it difficult to start new relationships with other people of the society. They always fear from rejection of the society and are unable to establish and maintain a healthy relationship with other people. Another cause of loneliness can be the lack of physical attraction due to which lonely people don't find the opportunities to meet with other people (Peplau & Perlman, 1982).

### **Loneliness and Age**

Loneliness varies with age. It is not consistent during childhood and is known that it is not experienced until pre-adolescence. It has been reported that children from pre-school age complain about loneliness and disappointment with their social life. At childhood, loneliness is associated to feelings of unpleasant emotions, unfulfilled needs, lack of friends around, and lack love from family (Asher & Paquette, 2003).

Possibly the children that are lonely spend major proportion of time being alone, therefore, such children require and intuition to interact compared to those who are already confident enough to interact with society. There is great discrepancy for this type of behavior for lonely clusters. Children of lonely clusters tend to spend time to try engaging with equals. In contrast to children from lonely clusters, other lonely children do not attempt to mix up with others and spend time in isolation. Such individual seems to escape social sittings and social contacts with others.

There are instances where lonely children from both lonely clusters exhibited a necessity for social connection (like depressive children and adults). In case of some lonely children, there is lack of initiative to communicate with others and even did not show interest to engage with others. The characteristics are the same as that of adults' loneliness in some respects. It is reported that lonely adults lack curiosity in others rather doubt and have negative attitude to future associations (Jones, Hobbs, & Hockenbury, 1982).

### **Loneliness and Families**

Family is a group of usually related people living together as a unit and sharing their feelings. It is a group of two or more than two people or is related by

marriage, blood relation, or adaptation and who live together. The immediate family traditionally consists of parents and their offspring. As a social unit with genetic, emotional, and legal dimensions, the family can foster the child's growth, development, health, and wellbeing. The family can provide the child with affection, a sense of belonging, and validation. Every area of a child's life is affected by the family.

When these break-ups occur in children's life especially in adolescents, are likely to experience a loss of hope. Parental career disappointment can cause anxiety and self-doubt in children, which can lead to school disruption and declining academic performance in young people. Finally, children may feel isolated from parents and friends.

Family system theory has something to present here. Interpersonal, intrapsychic and existential loneliness can be understood as in distinguishable parts of any family. To be physically separated from important family members may contribute to intrapsychic isolation of emotion, cutoff, and even to what Fogarty calls "inner death" conversely, the self-absorption and anxiety generated by the subjective state of loneliness influence both the quality and quantity of the individual's experience with members of the family. None of these experiences is completely free of existential loneliness, the deep awareness of an ultimate separateness from the world (Large, 1989).

### **Consequences of Loneliness**

Different researches suggest that loneliness places children at a disadvantage, which is very harmful for their healthy development. According to Bullock (1998), loneliness is a significantly negative predictor that can influence young children to immediate and long-term negative consequences. Friendships are of great importance in children's lives and are very much related with loneliness. Children that feel lonely report poor peer relations and express more loneliness than children having friends, further they miss to learn important life-long skills.

Children who feel lonely often experience poor peer relationships and therefore express more loneliness as compared to their peers in social sittings. They

often feel excluded a feeling that can be damaging to their self-esteem. In addition, they may experience feelings of sadness, depress, boredom, and alienation. Furthermore, early childhood experiences that contribute to loneliness may predict loneliness during adulthood. Consequently, lonely children may miss out on many opportunities to interact with their peers and to learn important lasting skills. Given the importance placed on the benefits of peer interactions and friendships to children's development, this potential lack of interaction raises many concerns for teachers who work with young children. Peer relations matter to children, and lonely children place as much importance on them as do other children (Bullock, 1998).

### **Inferiority Complex**

Adler (2006) was the first to theorize that all human beings have feelings of inferiority that become a primary source of motivation. Adler thought that behavior was motivated by the need to compensate for the feelings of inferiority: “We strive because we feel inferior, and we overcome our feeling of inferiority by successful striving”

When persons do not develop properly as children and cannot overcome these feelings of inferiority, they develop a complex around these feelings, which Adler called an “inferiority complex”

The construct of inferiority can be defined as an intimate, unrealistic, and persistent conviction of being always low-ranking in merit, value and intellectual and/or physical capacities (Yao et al., 1997).

Akdoğan (2017) found that between the primary school ages of 5 and 12 children struggle with issues of inferiority. These years are the most important in the development of a child’s sense of worth. If the child is discouraged and cannot meet the expectations placed upon them, the child will develop an inferiority complex.

Comparison and ranking of individuals in the classroom creates external shame that leads to inferiority feelings and depression. He found that attempts to avoid feelings of inferiority caused by external shame were linked to increased depression. People who fear inferiority feelings strive to avoid them, whereas people

who do not fear inferiority see others as helpful and supportive rather than shaming. Researchers suggested that when feelings of inferiority are connected to insecure striving and associated with depression and anxiety, they create submissive and inferior behavior. Research has shown that self-beliefs of inferiority, believing that others look down on the self and behaving passively are highly associated with depression. He suggested that when individuals are depressed, they feel like they are losing in their social life, have no desirable qualities, and have no acceptance or support (Goss, Gilbert, & Allan, 1994).

Children in the classroom who are ranked differently than their peers are more likely to feel unsafe and unwelcomed, thus creating feelings of inferiority. Shame and the avoidance of inferiority create feelings of depression and anxiety.

The problem of inferiority feelings is becoming frequent among youngsters with every passing day up to an alarming level. Teenage years are bearing the problem of complexes. Inferiority complex is a kind of psychological barrier that occurs usually in puberty and its reasons are complicated and its effects are negative and harmful.

Inferiority complex arises when a person finds himself in a situation where his abilities and attitudes are disapproving or rejected by other people. Inferiority complex is an exaggeration of natural feelings of inferiority and results when strivings to overcome inferiority are greatly hindered. Anything in the individual that is below the average ,that provokes unfavorable comment or gives him a feeling of incompetence leads to inferiority complex (Ansbacher, 1992).

Inferiority complex is an exaggeration of normal inferiority feelings and individuals with inferiority complex display a tendency towards over compensation and over reaction. Adolescents who again and again fail or repeat classes are found to develop inferiority complex and a non-progressive attitude towards school and peers. High degree of parental demands and expectations may lead to inferiority feelings. Inferiority feelings when intensified by external causes can lead to frustration getting manifested through various symptoms of either withdrawal or aggressive acts (Kenchappanavar, 2012).

Inferiority feeling depend on perception of self and surrounding. It's depend on our beliefs who we are, how other are and how we think the world should be for us. All our beliefs are interconnected. Bickhard (1978) state that inappropriate inferiority feeling came from mistaken goal, being self-centered instead of feeling connected to humanity.

### **Relationship between Inferiority Complex and Loneliness**

Loneliness is a most discussed phenomenon in individual psychology. Human begins to receive care since birth and the health of the individual is related to fact how social one is. Again, Adler believes that negligence during early years has a drastic effect on the personality of a person resulting in inferiority feeling. Such individuals have difficulties in handling their attachments. Imperfect attitudes of affiliated figures in the initial stage of life results in developing complexes. These complexes continue to haunt the person throughout life span (Adler, 1996).

Feelings of inferiority emanates from lack of social awareness of an individual is a major predictor of isolation. Indeed, inferiority feelings decrease as social interest grows. In this sense, lack of social interest is an exhibition of an inferiority complex.

Individuals with extreme inferiority complexes attempt to cope with this betraying to surpass others, and often found engaged unnecessarily in superiority efforts. Individuals with extreme inferiority complex deem everyone around as threats, and desire to severe any contacts due to sense of insecurity (Adler, 1996).

### **Peer Attachment**

Peer and peer attachment is phenomena that can vary. This is “biologically based tendency to seek proximity to preferred figure”. The attachment is an intense feeling of relatedness commonly denoting the relationship between peers with one in the role of caregiver. It is continuous survival mechanism, working from infancy throughout the life time by which the individual can explore the environment using

the attachment figure as a 'secure base', a source of safety and affect regulation (Bowlby, 1982).

The relationship among peers is based on two-way collaboration and responded with the same gesture of care, which is not required in parent child association that is based not necessarily mutual and even does not demand reciprocity. Adjustment and expansion of peers relationships are critical in adolescent to nourish cooperation and mutual trust, and developing agreement (Younes & Harp, 2007).

### **Peer Attachment and Psychological Well-being**

Link has been suggested between attachment with friends and colleagues and psychological well-being such as self-esteem and life satisfaction. The studies suggest that emotional support by peers provides bases, may be partially, to adolescents' psychological well-being (Bowlby, 1969).

Peer attachment theory stresses that interpersonal relationships between children and primary caregivers form self-view at the initial stages of life. The early attachments pattern turns into generalized pattern at the late adolescent stage. It is important to focus on one's emotional and cognitive independence in youths, the time attachment functions start to transfer. Close friends turn into figures of association while strong affiliation may be maintained with parents. Peers fulfill the need for seeking close and safe affiliation. It provides support to attachment system to young ones when they feel reluctant to seek comfort from parents at the time of sorrow (Nickerson & Nagle, 2005).

Peer attachment is understood as being a specific emotional bond established with one or a few peers, as opposed to other dimensions of friendship quality, such as conflict resolution, conflict betrayal, help, guidance, companionship and recreation while friendship quality has been observed as being related to well-being in adolescents. These authors emphasize the fact that provision of satisfaction of basic (emotional) psychological needs peer attachment is somehow behind the association between quality friendship and happiness (Parker & Asher, 1993).



The essential development during youth is that of giving up association with the parents and establishing affiliations with equals from either gender. Researchers have found that during early age the risk for loneliness is high and frequency among youths is higher during this phase. Equals becomes significant group during youthful age. It is also likely that youths may remain with the family figures and carries primary group to the late adolescent stage (Brown, 1990; Weiss, 1973).

The ratio of time given to family and friends changes during adolescence. During the early adolescence, the young ones spend time with primary figures. During late adolescence stage time is spent with equals because the expectations from friends than mere sharing activities. The tendency to feel lonelier grows manifold during this phase of growing. The demands from friends increase in terms of understanding and support that may cause feelings of dissatisfaction and confusion (Youniss & Smoller, 1985).

Although youths are exposed to more chances to develop new contacts, they develop impractical hopes about social prospects. They begin to have more practical expectations as they grow. It is observed that some youths establish new contacts with great ease, whereas some may find it hard to get contacts and thus feels lonesomeness (Peplau & Perlman, 1982).

### **Attachment with Peers during Adolescence**

Attachment was formerly defined as the strong emotional bond established between the infant and the primary caregiver (generally the mother). However, in recent years Attachment has been revised to include all important relationships including peers across the life span (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).

Attachment theory has emphasize particularly interesting applications for understanding adolescents' development, because it is during this time that children explore intimate, supported idea that close relationships with peers promote healthy adolescents adjustment. A central feature of attachment theory is the idea that children are constructing models of relationships out of communication with attachment figures. These models include expectations about the attachment figure's responsive and accessibility. Secure attachment with peers has been linked with perceived self-

worth, high levels of perspective taking and prosocial behavior, and decreased risk of emotional and behavioral problems (Steinberg, 2002).

**Piaget's theory.** According to Piaget peer is a person who is socially equal; As Piaget observed relationships with parents are relatively different from relationships with peers. Peer typically have an equal power and authority and must learn to appreciate each other's perspectives, to discuss and compromise, and to cooperate with each other. Thus Piaget believed that peers can make a unique contribution to social development that adult authority figures cannot make.

### **Relationship between Loneliness and Peer Attachment**

Gender predict loneliness differently, it has been observed that conditions for males and females to experience loneliness are different (Duck, Rutt, Hoy, & Strejc, 1991).

Researchers found that feelings of being alone are less intense in girls as compared to boys. Males are found to be feeling aloneness more often than females. Males are found to be having difficulty in handling loneliness as they are unable to express themselves and categorize issues arising in their relationships (Le Roux & Connors, 2001).

Loneliness is a determinant of a one's adverse feelings to social relations. It has been observed that people with loneliness tendency lacked ability to establish and maintain relations with others as compared to the less or no loneliness tendencies. Loneliness occurs in case a person fails to form intimate relationships with others (Hall & McGregor, 2000).

Attachment experience seeks to establish peer relationship that takes place during adolescence where children desire for higher level of independence. Individuals experience problems when they encounter negative events, and result is of feelings of isolation (Yilmaz & Orhan, 2010).

Several studies suggest the correlation between adolescent relationship problems and the poor coping behavior. Studies were conducted to examine this relationship and it was found that people experience problems as they are detached

from people, and this commonly observed among the adults. It was found that the youth with lesser interaction with friends remain low in confidence and as result develop feeling of loneliness and they begin to question their usefulness (Bowlby, 1982; Bretherton, 1987).

Studies suggest that attachment helps a person to adjust and engage in social associations. The findings of studies do not find relationship between lesser affiliation to friends or family and individual's poor performance in academics demonstrated by low grades. However, if youth possesses a fine sense of association with friends this result in giving him feelings of self-worth, higher self-esteem and academic performance.

### **Literature Review**

Bowlby's attachment theory and Adler's individual psychology have special significance in terms of either directly or indirectly explaining an individual's experiences of loneliness. Researcher shows that peer attachment has a statistically significant impact on loneliness. For example it was found that as severity of attachment increases loneliness decreases and if loneliness increases than level of attachment decreases (DiTommaso, Brannen-McNulty, Rose, & Burgess, 2003).

A research conducted by Nurmi, Toivonen, Salmela, and Eronen (1997) found that lonely students are to be less popular as compared to other classmates. These studies tell us how lonely individuals do not find it easy to form relationship, not even when they are regular in contact with others.

Taking gender as the predictor of loneliness, it is seen that males and female suffer from loneliness in different conditions. Studies have shown that boys experience more feeling of loneliness than girls. Findings of studies have concluded that males experience loneliness more frequently than females and are at a disadvantage with regard to expressing themselves and sorting out problems arising in the social relations (Le Roux & Connors 2001).

Akdoğan (2017) conducted a research on loneliness, inferiority complex and insecure attachment. The concepts of insecure attachment and inferiority feelings

are based on the hypothesis that the relationships individuals experience during the early years of their lives influenced both the form and quality of relationships they establish in adulthood. This study investigated to what extent the independent variables of insecure attachment and inferiority feelings can predict loneliness, and it was analyzed whether inferiority feelings have the role of mediator between insecure attachment and loneliness. The results showed that insecure attachment and inferiority feelings can predict loneliness significantly and that inferiority feelings have partial mediation effect between insecure attachment and loneliness

In a meta analytic study of predictors of loneliness during adolescence, Mahon et al., (2006) found that out of 31 researches, 19 demonstrated no noteworthy gender difference. Of the rest of the 12 researches, 9 reported about boys were fundamentally lonelier than girls; two different investigations demonstrated females were altogether lonelier than males. Loneliness level are higher among male as compared to female students because female students have better attachment abilities and are well socialized in the social-emotional area.

Loneliness is associated with many components that are viewed as a risk factors in the lives of students. Students who are lonely tends to end up plainly sad, deep in their sadness, self-destructive and take part in self- harm practices (Hermann & Betz, 2006).

A recent study reported significant negative correlation between loneliness and self-esteem. Study also found that there is no significant correlation on gender differences with loneliness which is consistent with the studies based in Pakistani culture (Ishaq, Solomon, & Khan, 2017).

There are important factors that contribute to creating and maintaining feelings of inferiority, such as family school or university, society and as well as other important factors out of reach and which govern them (Toutouchi, Fakhari, & Kolahi, 2006).

A research conducted by Kenchappanavar (2012) to investigate the relationship between inferiority complex and frustration in adolescents. The results revealed that Inferiority complex correlated significantly with frustration. The correlation was specifically high on frustration. Further regression analysis was

carried out to see whether frustration would predict Inferiority complex. It was revealed that frustration significantly predicts inferiority complex. It was assumed that loneliness might be the cause of frustration, along with other variables.

Inferiority complex has also been determined as a factor predicting loneliness. Inferiority complex generally rises due to the feeling of low confidence and not being able to participate in social gatherings or consider themselves inferior from others. This behavior is also analyzed by other researches that loneliness is closely related with inferiority feelings (Adler, 1996; Ansbacher, 1992; Dreikurs, 1977). Sociability was positively associated with peer relationships and made negative indirect contribution to loneliness. It has been observed that socially active children tend to have less loneliness issues. Aggression also made significant indirect contribution to loneliness. Shyness-sensitivity is also associated with loneliness among the children from various race and nationalities (Peplau & Perlman, 1982).

Researchers state that loneliness is an important indicator of a person's inability to establish friendships or special relations. It is usually related to a person's negative feelings with respect to interpersonal relationships. Individuals who experience loneliness were seen to be less competent in carrying out interpersonal relationships than those who did not considered themselves as lonely (Carnary & Spitzberg, 1993)

Level of peer attachment among college students was studied by Fass and Tubman (2002). According to the study, peer attachment plays an important role in an individual's adjustment and social transition in college. Academic performance is positively correlated with peer support. Although less attachment to peer group or family was not the only reason found for an individual's low grades or poor academic performance, yet good sense of attachment with peers proved to become of the reasons for an individual's feeling of self-worth and higher self-esteem.

Lonely college students were found to be less agreeing upon self-disclosure than the individuals who didn't experience loneliness. Moreover precisely, disclosure of emotions or distress to others is a more important factor in developing relationships than the disclosure of information and facts. Disclosure of emotions results in understanding one's inner self and getting an idea of the individual, thus

making possible the development of interpersonal relation and decreasing the feelings linked to loneliness. Hence a new college student when discloses his/her emotions or distress comfortably to others, feeling of loneliness as well as subsequent depressions are more likely to decrease (Laurenceau, Barrett, & Pietromonaco, 1998).

In Pakistan a research was conducted to assess peer attachment and loneliness in students of higher education institutes. Peer attachment and loneliness have negative correlation which clearly demonstrates that an individual with higher peer attachment capability will have less loneliness issues and be more happy and satisfied. Mean difference reveals significant variance for male and female intensity of loneliness and peer attachment. No significant results found between day scholars and hostilities students (Javed, 2014).

In Pakistan another research was conducted to explore the relationship between shyness and loneliness among adolescents. The sample of the study consisted of 300 adolescents. The age range of sample was 14 to 16. It was explored that shyness was positively correlated with loneliness and girls will score high on loneliness as compared to boys. The study also highlighted very important factor regarding family system. It has been revealed that adolescents who belong to the nuclear families exhibited more loneliness as compare to extended families (Parveen, 2008).

In Pakistan a research was conducted to examined the relationship between loneliness, social support and adjustment among adolescents. Sample of the study comprised of 144 females and 156 male students. Loneliness had significant negative relationship with social support. Results showed significant gender difference on loneliness, female scored high on loneliness as compared to male students (Irshad, 2016).

### **Rational of the Study**

During the course of life adolescents experience loneliness, caused by many consequences which lead to inferiority complex. University is a time of change from being immature adolescents to being mature adults. An incredible number of rising

mature people additionally leave the parental home so as to go to school, college and university. Normally, this change makes them turn progressively for attachment to their peers.

The present aim of study is to explore the relationship between loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment. Few researches have been conducted on loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment separately but there is no research which could demonstrate the relationship of these three variables within local culture context.

Loneliness and inferiority complex relating to gender differences have been examined extensively unfortunately; the results were without a conclusion. For instance, many studies believe male students are lonelier than their female class fellows (Deniz, Hamarta, & Ari, 2005) while others concluded that it was actually female students who experienced loneliness more than male students (Anderson, Horowitz, & French, 1983; Page & Cole, 1991) and other found no significant gender differences relating to loneliness (Al-Kfaween, 2010; Archibald, Bartholomew, & Marx, 1995; Knox, Vail-Smith, & Zusman, 2007; Weiss, 1982).

The age range of the sample is 18 to 25 because it was assumed that at this age male and females are better report their feelings as compared to younger children and this can comprehend the purpose of this research. Researchers' state that good peer relationship reduces or diminishes loneliness (Adel, 2004; Asher & Paquette, 2003). Perlman and Peplau (1984) who observed that adolescents having particular friends (i.e., peer functioning as attachment figures) reported receiving more support from classmates and their friends, and secondly their well-being levels were higher when friendship tie was greater.

Students who lived isolated report more inferior and lower self-esteem. This inferior sense of self includes negative judgments of their bodies, sexuality, physical condition, appearance, behavior, and functioning. Given these self-perceptions, it comes as no surprise that inferior students report feelings of emptiness, sadness, discomfort, separation, anxiety and being unloved (Peplau & Perlman, 1982).

Family dynamics play an important role in loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment. There are two family systems or domain in Pakistan such as individualistic and collectivistic which talk about the family system its impact on loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment. So keeping in view the scary of literature the study explored the relationship between family system on loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment.

Many researchers have investigated loneliness with other constructs e.g. depression, personality, self-efficacy, academic performance, social acceptance self-esteem etc. But researches are deficient about the importance of peers in which they play their significant role as attachment figures, despite the fact that close relationships with peers boost healthy adjustment. Also most of the researchers have concentrated on studying the episode of loneliness and attachment with parents and peers among children. But adolescents and early adulthood (i.e., university students) have been found to be undergoing loneliness especially at very high risk (Cutrona, 1990; Demir & Tarhan, 2001). The present research is an effort to bridge this gap.



## **Method**

## METHOD

### Objectives

1. To investigate association of loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment among university students
2. To examine difference for loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment by considering demographic variables i.e., age, gender, family system, residence and education, birth order, no. of siblings and no. of peers.

### Hypotheses

1. There will be a negative relationship between loneliness and peer attachment.
2. There will be a negative relationship between inferiority complex and peer attachment.
3. Feeling of loneliness is higher in male as compare to female students.
4. Feeling of inferiority complex is higher in females as compare to males.
5. Peer attachment is higher for students living in nuclear family as compare to joint family.

### Operational definition

**Loneliness.** Loneliness is a subjective and distressing negative experience and occurs in a person's social relations out of a withdrawal from human contact based on a need for psychological security (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980)

Higher score on the loneliness scale indicates increase in loneliness. Low score indicates decrease in loneliness (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980)

**Inferiority complex.** The construct of inferiority can be defined as an intimate, unrealistic, and persistent conviction of being always low-ranking in merit, value and intellectual and/or physical capacities (Yao et al., 1997).

High score on the inferiority scale indicates increase in inferiority complex and vice-versa (Yao et al., 1997).

**Peer attachment.** It is defined as the adolescent's perceptions of the positive and negative affective cognitive dimensions of relationships with intimate friends particularly how well these figures served as a source of psychological security (Amsden & Greenberg, 1987).

High scores on peer from Inventory of Parents and Peer Attachment (IPPA) indicate secure attachment with intimate friends and low scores on peer from of IPPA indicates insecure attachment with intimate friends (Amsden & Greenberg, 1987).

### **Instruments**

**Loneliness Scale.** Developed by (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980).UCLA has been commonly used to measure the feelings of loneliness.

The construct of loneliness has 20 items and is used to measure one's loneliness. Semantic differential scale has been used to rate the feelings of students where O stands for ('I often feel this way') =4, S for ("I sometimes feel this way")=3, R for ("I rarely feel this way")=2& N for ("I never feel this way")=1. The measure has been revised for score and for simplification of language. The instrument displays reliability within the range between.89-.90 (Russell, Peplau & Cutrona 1980).

**The Inferiority Scale.** The inferiority scale was developed by Yao et al., (1997). The scale is a self-report measure with a format of 5 point likert scale. The scale consisting of 34 items including 17 items assessing self-appraisal of inferiority and 17 items assessing inferiority linked to other judgments. The reliability coefficient ranges from .89 to .90 (Yao et al., 1997).

**Peer Attachment Scale.** Armsden and Greenberg (1987) devised the measures for peer attachment on five points likert scale. IPPA, in its updated version, has been employed to measure the construct. The measures are grouped in 25 items (mother perspective), 25 items (father perspective), and 25 items (friend perspective). This scale evaluates three broad aspects namely "mutual trust, quality of communication, and extent of alienation with peers". The focus is to find how

exactly the dimensions of attachment determine the psychological reliability. PPA is revised for scoring negative keyed questions. Some eight negative keyed items are reverse coded. A reliability measure of Cronbach alpha is between 0.87-0.93 that is in the acceptable range (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).

Inventory of parent and peer attachment (IPPA) scale is comprised of nine subscales (three for each trust, communication and alienation) of mother, father and peer.

### **Sample**

In this study total sample size taken was 300 which were reduced to 271 as some of the respondents didn't fill the questionnaire completely and therefore it was excluded from the study. It included 170 males and 101 females the required demographics such as age gender, family system residence, education level were also reported by the sample. For collection of data purposive non-probability sampling technique was used. For data collection, male and female students between 18 to 25 years were served with the questionnaire. Students from different educational level were participated in study.

The sample was provided with a copy of the consent form (Appendix A), demographic sheet (Appendix B), loneliness questionnaire (appendix C), inferiority complex (Appendix D) and peer attachment (Appendix E). The scale used in this study was open to all research students no permission from the respective author

### **Demographic Information**

A questionnaire was intended to collect general demographic information including age, gender, family system, residence education level, No. of siblings, No. of peers and birth order.

**Table 1**

Sample demographic description of main study (N=271)

Variables	<i>f</i>	%
<b>Age</b>		
Late adolescents (18-20)	123	45.4
Early adulthood (21-25)	148	54.6
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	170	62.7
Male	101	37.3
<b>Education</b>		
Bachelor	154	56.8
Master	60	22.1
M. Phil	57	21.0
<b>Family system</b>		
Nuclear	140	51.7
Joint	131	48.3
<b>Residence</b>		
Hostel	134	49.4
Day scholar	137	50.6
<b>No. of siblings</b>		
No. of siblings(1-5)	201	74.2
No. of siblings (6-10)	70	25.8
<b>Birth order</b>		
First born	93	34.3
Last born	68	25.1
Other born	110	40.6
<b>No. of peers</b>		
No. of peer (0)	4	1.5
No. of peers (1-2)	135	49.8
No. of peers (3-5)	132	48.7

Table 1 shows the demographic description of the study. The study included males (37.3%) and females (62.7%) of both joint (48.3%) and nuclear (51.7%) families. The students taken in the sample both hostilities (49.4 %) and day-scholar (50.6%). The study includes both groups of no. of siblings group 1 (1-5) and group 2 (6-10) percentage include (74.2%) and (25.8 %) respectively. The study includes first born (34.3%) and last born (25.1%) respectively. The study includes three groups of no of peers (0), (1-2) and (3-5) percentage include (4%) (49.8%) and (48.7%) respectively.

## **Procedure**

From the total 300 sample size, I have successfully managed to collect 271 responses and discarded 29 due to incomplete/ unfilled questionnaire. Before circulating the questionnaire, a formal consent form for the data confidentiality was given to participants. The respondents were told about the purpose of the study and once they agreed to participate the consent form was got signed. It was explicitly conveyed to them that the information would not be shared with any third party or only upon permission of the respondents. It was communicated that in case of any doubt they are welcome to ask for clarification. Questionnaires were served with suggestion to read and understand the guideline and afterwards fill the questionnaire. Participants were informed to be fair and accurate in their replies and answer all the items. A questionnaire was expected to take 20 to 30 minutes.

The measurement models were tested reliability and descriptive statistics then for correlation, group analysis by using Statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS)

## **Results**

## RESULTS

The current study was planned with the major aim to explore the relationship of loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment among university students. For all the scales Cronbach alpha coefficient were computed to determine the reliability. Descriptive statistics showed the normality of the data. Correlation coefficient was computed to find the relationship between variables. To find mean differences independent t-test was computed. Regression analysis was carried out to check the predictability of loneliness on peer attachment.

### Reliability of Measures

Estimates were assessed for loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment to establish the reliability.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Reliability Coefficient for the study variables (N=271)*

Variables	Items	M	SD	$\alpha$	Range		Skewness	Kurtosis
					Potential	Actual		
UCLA	20	46.16	6.90	.56	20-80	26-66	-.11	-.21
TIS	34	93.87	23.3	.91	34-170	34-119	-.01	.47
<b>IPPA</b>	25	79.61	15.3	.86	25-125	36-119	-.08	.04
TRST	10	34.67	7.84	.81	10-50	12-50	-.31	-.42
COM	8	26.43	6.60	.79	8-40	9-110	-.04	-.68
ALIN	7	18.50	4.37	.51	7-35	18-35	-.62	1.32

*Note.* UCLA=Loneliness, TIS= The Inferiority Scale, IPPA=Peer attachment, TRST=Trust, COM=communication, ALI=Alienation

Table 2 shows alpha reliabilities of the scales and their subscales. The alpha reliabilities of loneliness scale is  $\alpha=.56$ , inferiority scale is  $\alpha=.91$ , peer attachment scale is  $\alpha=.86$ . Alpha reliability of the subscale of peer attachment scale are  $\alpha=.81$  for trust,  $\alpha=.79$  for communication, and  $\alpha=.51$  for alienation. Alpha reliability coefficient shows that all scales and subscales are highly reliable except UCLA and subscale of peer attachment which has satisfactory reliability. The value of mean for each scale represents the participants' average scores. The value of standard deviation indicates



how much the responses scattered from the mean for each variable. Among the descriptive statistics, the scales have their skewness values below than 2 indicate that their distribution lies within normality. Negative values of skewness indicate presence of lower values and the distribution tail points towards the left side and the positive values indicate that the distribution tail points towards the right side.

**Table 3**

*Correlation Matrix among Study Variables (N=271)*

Variables	UCLA	TIS	IPPA	TRST	COM	ALIN
UCLA	-	.07	-.23**	-.30	-.26**	.13*
TIS		-	.18**	.04	.06	.46**
IPPA			-	.92**	.90**	.47**
TRST				-	.81**	.22**
COM					-	.17**
ALIN						-

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01

Note. UCLA=Loneliness, TIS= Inferiority complex, IPPA=Peer attachment, TRST=Trust, COM=communication, ALIN=Alienation.

Table 3 indicates the correlation among loneliness, inferiority complex and dimensions of peer attachment. The estimated values revealed the non-significant positive relationship of loneliness with inferiority complex. Loneliness is significantly negatively correlated to peer attachment and its subscales except alienation which is positively related to loneliness. It can be interpreted as, increase in loneliness will cause decrease peer attachment, trust and communication and also that increase in loneliness will tend to increase the alienation. Inferiority is positively related to peer attachment and all its subscales and significantly related to alienation and non-significantly related to trust and communication. Loneliness is positively related with inferiority but non-significant relationship. Peer attachment has significantly positively related with its subscales.



**Table 4**

Mean, standard deviation and *t*-values for male and female students on Study Variable (*n*=271)

Variables	Male ( <i>n</i> =170)		Female ( <i>n</i> =101)		<i>t</i> (269)	<i>p</i>	95%CI	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			LL	UL
UCLA	46.54	6.71	45.53	7.18	-1.33	.24	-2.73	.527
TIS	91.75	20.37	97.45	27.36	1.94	.05	-.056	11.43
<b>IPPA</b>	79.45	13.42	80.21	18.10	.222	.82	-3.36	4.22
TRST	34.59	7.36	34.82	8.61	.231	.81	-1.71	2.17
COM	26.27	6.09	26.70	7.42	.520	.60	-1.20	2.06
ALIN	18.59	3.79	18.36	5.23	-.421	.67	-1.31	.853

Note. UCLA=Loneliness, TIS= Inferiority complex, IPPA=Peer attachment, TRST=Trust, COM=communication, ALIN=Alienation.

Table 4 indicates the results of t-test to compare gender difference in loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment. A result of the study has shown that there is non-significant difference in all of three variables.

**Table 5**

Mean, standard deviation and *t*-value for student's family system (i.e., joint and nuclear) on study variables (*N*=271)

Variables	Joint ( <i>n</i> =131)		Nuclear ( <i>n</i> =140)		<i>t</i> (269)	<i>p</i>	95% CL		Cohen's d
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			LL	UL	
UCLA	41.82	6.35	40.89	6.81	-1.16	.24	-2.51	648	-
TIS	97.16	21.13	90.81	24.92	-2.25	.05	-11.89	0.80	-
<b>IPPA</b>	82.48	12.04	86.94	14.32	1.49	.00	1.28	7.63	.18
TRST	33.61	7.54	35.68	8.00	2.18	.03	0.20	3.93	.26
COM	25.66	6.25	27.16	6.86	1.87	.06	-0.07	3.07	-
ALIN	18.91	4.40	18.12	4.33	1.48	.15	-0.78	0.531	-

Note. UCLA=Loneliness, TIS= Inferiority complex, IPPA=Peer attachment, TRST=Trust, COM=communication, ALIN=Alienation.

Table 5 shows the difference on joint and nuclear family system for loneliness inferiority complex and peer attachment. Result showed non-significant difference for loneliness and subscale of peer attachment i.e., communication and alienation. Significance difference was focused on inferiority complex and peer attachment and its subscale i.e., trust. It can be seen that joint family system has high level of inferiority complex than nuclear family system. Results revealed that peer attachment in single family is higher compared to extended family.

**Table 6***One way Analysis of variance for Sample Education on study variables (N=271)*

Variables	Bachelor (n = 154)		Master (n=60)		M.Phill (n =57)		95%CI						
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>I-J</i>	<i>D.(I-J)</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
UCLA	44.96	6.52	47.4	7.76	48.04	6.35	5.72	.00	3>1	3.074*	1.00	45.48	49.49
TIS	94.45	22.0	88.3	23.39	98.11	25.9	2.67	.07					
IPPA	80.38	15.3	78.1	13.83	79.07	16.7	.49	.61					

*Note.* UCLA=Loneliness, TIS= Inferiority complex, IPPA=Peer attachment,

Table 6 shows significant difference of participants with different educational level on loneliness. For the comparison that is master vs M.Phil. For the comparison loneliness is significantly high for the participants who have M.Phil. Level of education as compare to master and bachelor students. Mean difference also show that loneliness is significantly high in M. Phil students than master and bachelor students.

**Table 7**

*Mean, standard deviation and t-value for student's no. of siblings (1 to 10) on study variables*

variables	No. of siblings (1-5) (n=201)		No. of siblings (6-10) (n=70)		<i>t</i> (269)	<i>P</i>	95%CI	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
UCLA	41.17	6.52	41.81	6.83	-.704	.48	-2.60	1.13
TIS	92.68	23.37	97.18	23.07	-1.40	.16	-10.80	1.81
IPPA	79.14	15.78	80.93	13.92	-.85	.39	-5.94	2.35
TRST	34.34	8.11	41.70	6.92	-1.21	.22	-3.45	.82
COM	26.37	6.68	26.60	6.41	-.24	.80	-2.03	1.58
ALIN	18.43	4.59	18.70	3.70	-.43	.66	-1.46	.931

*Note.* UCLA=Loneliness, TIS= Inferiority complex, IPPA=Peer attachment, TRST=Trust, COM=communication, ALIN=Alienation.

Table 7 indicates the t-test results for no of siblings (1-5) and no.of siblings(6-10).The table shows non- significant difference for all variables.

**Table 8**

Mean standard deviation and *t*-value for student's birth order (1 to 10) on study variables

Variables	1 <sup>st</sup> born ( <i>n</i> =93)		Last born ( <i>n</i> =68)		<i>t</i> (269)	<i>p</i>	95% CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
UCLA	40.00	6.30	42.56	7.23	-2.39	.01	-4.67	-0.44	0.37
TIS	92.52	24.34	97.16	22.85	-1.22	.22	-12.12	2.83	-
<b>IPPA</b>	79.16	14.94	76.87	17.43	0.89	.37	-2.76	7.34	-
TRST	34.26	7.80	33.16	8.44	0.85	.39	-1.45	3.64	-
COM	26.74	6.44	25.10	7.40	1.49	.13	-0.52	3.80	-
ALIN	18.16	4.64	18.60	4.79	-0.58	.55	-1.92	1.04	-

*Note.* UCLA=Loneliness, TIS= Inferiority complex, IPPA=Peer attachment, TRST=Trust, COM=communication, ALIN=Alienation.

Table 8 indicates the *t*-test results for loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment. The table shows significant difference for loneliness. It can be seen that last born have more loneliness than first born. Table shows non-significant difference for inferiority, peer attachment, and its subscales.

**Table 9**

Mean, standard deviation and *t*-value for student's no of peers (i.e., 0 to 5) on study variables (N=271).

Variables	No. of peers (0) (n=4)		No. of peers (1-2) (n=135)		No. of peers (3-5) (n=132)		95%CI						
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>I-J</i>	<i>D(I-J)</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
UCLA	44.25	8.26	46.45	6.70	45.93	7.09	.344	.70					
TIF	80.25	25.78	77.23	15.02	82.03	14.9	3.34	.06					
<b>IPPA</b>	64.75	15.32	91.80	20.84	91.53	24.3	2.81	.03	2>3	4.80*	.93	39.22	121.28

Note, UCLA=Loneliness Scale, TIS=The Inferiority Scale, IPPA=Inventory of Parent and Peer attachment

Table 9 indicates the results for loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment. The table shows non-significant differences for loneliness and inferiority complex. Results revealed Significance difference for peer attachment.

## **Discussion**



## DISCUSSION

This present study explored the relationship between loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment among late adolescents and early adulthoods. In the main study total sample size was 300 which were reduce to 271 as some of the respondents didn't fill questionnaire completely and therefore it was excluded from the study. It included 170 males and 101 females. The age range of sample was 18 to 25. The main objective of the study was to explore the relationship between loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment among university students. Demographic variables such as age, gender, family system, residence, educational level were also analyzed in this study with study variables i.e., loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment. Research design of this study was correlation and purposive sampling technique was used to assess the sample.

To measure the constructs of the study variable loneliness were measured by UCLA questionnaire developed by Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, (1980). Moreover, Inferiority complexes were measured by The Inferiority Scale developed by Yao et al., (1997). Furthermore peer attachment were measured by (IPPA) developed by Armsden & Greenberg (1987).

### **Descriptive, Alpha –coefficient for study variables**

Descriptive, alpha- coefficient and skewness for loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment of late adolescents and early adulthoods. In order to present the study results summarized from means, and standard deviations were computed for each variable of the study

The alpha reliability of loneliness (UCLA) questionnaire was  $\alpha=.56$ , the alpha reliability of The Inferiority Scale (TIS) was  $\alpha= .91$  and the alpha reliability of Peer Attachment Scale (IPPA) was  $\alpha=.86$ . The alpha reliability of subscales of peer attachment i.e., trust  $\alpha=.81$ , communication  $\alpha=.79$  and alienation  $\alpha=.51$ . A psychometric investigation of the IPPA tells us that on the whole, the coefficient demonstrated good internal consistency for all of the variables, with exception of those for the alienation sub-

scale of the peer attachment scale, which was also weaker as found to be 0.69 (Gullone & Robinson, 2005). Analysis was done using SPSS on all the demographics. For analyzing the data internal consistency Cronbach's alpha was calculated for all of the scales. The reliabilities of all the scales and subscales were analyzed through reliability analysis. The reliabilities of all the scales within acceptable range (Aron & Aron, 2003).

The value of mean for each scale represents the participant's average scores. The value of standard deviation indicates how much the responses are scattered from the mean for each variable. Skewness and kurtosis of the measures were also calculated, results showed acceptable range of Skewness (+2 to - 2) and kurtosis of all the measure (George & Mallery, 2010). Overall this suggests that data was normally distributed. Negative values of skewness indicate presence of lower values and distribution tail points towards the left side and the positive values indicate the distribution tail point towards right side.

#### **Correlation between loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment among late adolescents and early adulthoods**

Correlation analysis was carried out between the loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment. The first hypothesis of the study about the relationship between loneliness and peer attachment is significantly and negatively correlated (Table 2) has been confirmed. There was strongly negatively correlation between loneliness and peer relationships. The adequate level of peer attachment helps in decreasing the subsequent feelings of loneliness (Yilmaz & Orhan, 2010). This finding is consistent with findings of (Goswick & Jones, 1982) whose research among high school adolescents indicated that peer relations was the most important factor in their level of loneliness. They had an inverse relation and were strongly significant. Based on this study and the previous ones, higher levels of loneliness indicate low level of peer attachment.

Student with high level of inferiority shows low level of peer attachment which is our second hypothesis has been confirmed. From literature review it can be found that people who are excessively spoiled or ignored during the early years of development causes individuals to experience inferiority feelings and, thus to have problems in

their social relationship. Faulty attitudes of caregivers during the early years lead individuals to develop inferiority feelings, and these feelings are continued even during adulthood (Adler, 2006).

### **Difference of gender among loneliness and inferiority complex**

T-test was computed to look at the difference of gender among loneliness inferiority complex and peer attachment.

The third and four hypothesis of the study stated that male students experiencing less feeling of loneliness and inferiority complex as compared to female students has been rejected. Gender differences were also explored with reference to loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment. Many researchers found male students were lonelier (Deniz, Hamarta, & Ari, 2005). Meanwhile, others have found female students showed higher level of loneliness (Anderson, Horowitz & French, 1983; Page & Cole 1991). On the contrary to the both, few researchers have found non-significant gender difference in loneliness factor (Al- Kfween, 2010; Archibald, Bartholomew, & Marx, 1995; Knox, Vail-Smith, & Zusman, 2007; Weiss, 1982). As we live in modern world in which every individual have opportunity to use internet and use social media. They make person on self Confidence and low in loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment.

### **Difference of family system on peer attachment**

T-test was computed to look the difference of family system on peer attachment.

Peer attachment in nuclear family system is high as compared to joint family system which is our fifth hypothesis has been confirmed. The individuals whose were living in nuclear family system develop close relationship with their friends. Also probable reason for students need high peer attachment is that the life style of people living in nuclear family system are quite changing and limited to each individual of a family as in nuclear family system. In Pakistani culture every individual is much busy in his/her life that family member cannot spend reasonable time with one another sufficiently because of their busy schedule and social circle of their own see (Table 5).

### **No. of Siblings Differences on Loneliness**

*t*-test was computed to look the difference of no. of siblings on loneliness.

The *t*-test analysis also revealed non-significance relationship on all three variables i.e., loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment on student's no. of siblings see (Table 7). Medora and Woodward (1986) also found non-significant relationship between loneliness and number of siblings because one child took a lot of attachment and attention from family and parents that's why child was not feeling of loneliness.

In a family in which number of siblings more than two have a close relationship with each other that make more superior and confident and showed low feeling of loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment.

### **No. of peers on peer attachment**

The *t*-test analysis also indicates significant relationship on peer attachment. Attachment theory has particularly interesting application for understanding adolescent development, because it is during this time that children explore intimate, supportive relationship outside of the family, generally with peers. Literature has supported the idea that close relationships with peers promote healthy adolescent adjustment with peers has been linked with perceived self-worth, high levels of perspective taking and prosocial behavior, and decreased risk of emotional and behavior problems (Steinberg , 2002).

### **Birth order difference on Loneliness**

The *t*-test analysis of birth order revealed significant relationships on study variable i.e., loneliness.

Researchers found that birth order has an effect on loneliness. Students who were first in birth order had low level of loneliness than students who were last born (Soysal, 2016).

## **Conclusion**

This work was carried to explore the association among loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment of young people. Results of the research indicated that non-significant gender difference among all three variables. Research also highlighted findings regarding family system. Those adolescents who belong to joint family system are more prone to inferiority complex as compare to those who lived in nuclear family system.

## **Limitations**

1. Data was taken only from two cities i.e., Rawalpindi and Islamabad, so the result cannot be generalized on the whole population. Thus in order to better establish the reliability and validity of the scale and to generalize the findings, sample size from different cities of Pakistan should taken.
2. There was unequal number of students taken from the universities; equal number of students from both the public and private universities can provide a clear picture of variable differences. A large sample will help to have more confident on the result of the study
3. The current study comprised of self-report measure instrument, which is one of the major problem because of response set. It can affect the results of the study due to response bias. So it is recommended that interviews should also be conducted along with questionnaire.

## **Suggestions**

1. The data should be collected from different cities for generalization purpose.
2. Different control could be implemented as data should be collected when participants are relaxed.
3. Relation among loneliness, inferiority complex and peer attachment may also be assessed for the children and teenagers.
4. Effect of different attachment styles may be examined on variables of the study.

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## **Appendices**

## **INFORMED CONSENT**

I am research student of M.sc at National institute of psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. I am conducting the present research to find relationship between inferiority complex loneliness and peer attachment. For this purpose you will have to complete following questionnaires. This process will take about 20 to 30 minutes.

Your identity and information obtained from you during this research will remain confidential. The data obtained from you will be published without mentioning you are identity.

You have to right to refuse to participate in this research. You may also withdraw your data at any stage of the research. However, there is not physical, psychological, or social risk in participating in this study. Your cooperation is highly valuable and will assist to advance scientific knowledge.

Thanks.

### **Consent**

I am willing to participate in the study and I have no objection to above mentioned process of publication of information obtained from me.

---

(Signature)

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(Name) (Optional)



### Demographic Information Sheet

Gender ----- female ----- male -----  
Age -----  
Education -----  
Family system ----- nuclear ----- joint -----  
Residence ----- hostel ----- day scholar -----  
No of siblings -----  
Your birth order -----  
No of peers -----

### Instructions:

Indicate how often each of the statements below is descriptive of you. Response categories: 3=often 2=sometimes 1=rarely 0=never.

No. of items	Often (3)	Sometimes (2)	Rarely (1)	Never (0)
1. I am unhappy doing so many things alone.				
2. I have nobody to talk to.				
3. I cannot tolerate being so alone.				
4. I lack companionship				
5. I feel as if nobody really understands me.				
6. I find myself waiting for people to call or write.				
7. There is no one I can turn to.				
8. I am no longer close to anyone.				
9. My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me.				
10. I feel left out.				
11. I feel completely alone				
12. I am unable to reach out and communicate with these around me.				

13. My social Relationships are superficial.				
14. I feel starved for company.				
15. No one really knows me well.				
16. I feel isolated from others.				
17. I am unhappy Being so withdraw.				
18. It is difficult for me to make friends.				
19. I feel shut out and excluded by others.				
20. People are around me but not with me.				

## Instructions

Please read carefully the list of statements below, and rate each of them from 1 to 5 according to the following scale: 1= does not fit at all. 2=fits slightly 3=fits moderately 4=fits strongly enough 5=fits exactly.

No.of items	Does not fit at all	Fits slightly	Fits moderately	Fits strongly enough	Fits exactly
1. I often fear being worse than others.					
2. When I am doing things in a wrong way, I fear people will believe that I am less competent than others.					
3. I always feel that no one sees my qualities.					
4. I must always be able to cope with the situation, if I don't, I feel inferior to anybody.					
5. I often fear that people may have a bad image of me.					
6. Even if I have many qualities, I always feel as if I had none.					
7. I cannot stand to be tried, this depreciates me.					
8. If others compliment me, they will discover that I did not deserve it.					
9. I fear to look foolish, this can diminish me.					
10. Even though I can succeed in certain difficult things, I always feel less competent than others.					
11. If I look clumsy, others will disregard me.					
12. I always should do better than others, if I don't, everybody will underestimate me.					

13. If others criticize me, I feel they put me down.					
14. If others see my weaknesses, they will believe that I am incompetent.					
15. I always want things to be done properly, if they are not, I am inferior.					
16. If I criticized, this means that other judge me harshly.					
17. I have to be at least as knowledgeable as others in order to be appreciated by them.					
18. I feel depreciated when I ask for help.					
19. I fear not being able to cope with the situation, because this means I will not be appreciated by everybody					
20. I fear to make the least mistake, because I take the risk to give others a bad image of myself.					
21. If I show the least sign of anxiety, then I am going to be taken as less strong than others.					
22. I have the feeling that my faults or weaknesses are often noticed by others to decrease my own value.					
23. I must always do more things than others, if I don't I am worthless.					
24. I only See my weaknesses so I feel depreciated.					
25. If, for some reason, I cannot do what I am asked to, then people will believe I am inefficient.					
26. If I do not know how to answer all the questions people ask me, then I found myself less intelligent than others.					
27. If I admire my weaknesses, then I take the risk of decreasing my qualities.					

28. I often feel inferior because people judge me negatively.					
29. Even though someone complains me, I still have the feeling that I have not done well enough.					
30. If I make only one mistake, then I will be looked down by others.					
31. I never feel satisfied with my successes. Because others find that is not remarkable.					
32. If I do not succeed in something I wanted to do, then I see myself as weak in all fields.					
33. I always compare myself with others who are better, so I always feel inferior.					
34. If I do not succeed in doing everything that others expect from me, and then I will judged as an incompetent person.					

## Instruction.

This questionnaire asks about your relationship with your peers. Each of the following statements asks you relationship with your close friends. Responses categories:1= Almost never or never true2=Not very true3=Sometimes true4=often true5=Almost always or always true

No. of items	Almost never or never true	Not very true	Sometimes true	often true	Almost always or always true
1.I like to get my friend's point of view on things I'm concerned about					
2. My friends can tell when I'm upset about something					
3. When I discuss things, my friends care about my point of view.					
4. Talking over my problems with friends makes me feel ashamed or foolish					
5. I wish I had different friends.					
6. My friends understand me.					
7. My friends encourage me to talk about my difficulties.					
8. My friends accept me as I am.					
9. I feel the need to be in touch with my friends more often.					
10. My friends don't understand what I'm going through these days.					

11. I feel alone or apart when I am with my friends.					
12. My friends listen to what I have to say.					
13. My friends are fairly easy to talk to.					
14. When I am angry about something my friends try to be understand					
15. My friends help me to Understand myself better.					
16. My friends care about how I am.					
17. I feel angry with my friends.					
18. I can count on my friends when I need to get something off my chest					
19. I trust my friends.					
20. My friends respect my feelings.					
21. I get upset a lot more than my friends know about.					
22. It seems as if my friends are so irritated with me for no reasons.					
23. I can tell my friends about my problems and troubles.					
24. If my friends know something is bothering me, they ask me about it.					



